

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Vaccines must be the property of humanity, not for monopoly profit
— PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 85/NO. 41 NOVEMBER 8, 2021

Vote SWP! Expand reach of 'Militant,' books, party

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With the 2021 elections just days away, the *Militant* urges readers to campaign for and vote for the Socialist Workers Party candidates and join in the fight to advance the party's working-class program, which the SWP fights for 365 days a year.

The party's candidates are spreading the word about today's strike struggles, joining picket lines and building much-needed solidarity. They explain that workers are capable of acting together as a class to advance our own interests against the ruling capitalists who exploit us on the job, to fight for a working-class foreign policy and lead millions to take political power.

In most of the labor battles today — like the strikes at John Deere and Kellogg's — the main questions are long hours, dangerous schedules, multiple wage and benefit tiers that divide workers, wages that don't keep up with rising prices, and the disdain for workers shown by bosses seeking to put the crisis of their capitalist system on our backs.

Workers everywhere have heard about the shooting death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of
Continued on page 3

Back Kellogg strike, fight against divisive wage tiers 'Equal pay for equal work' wins wide support



Photo by Andrea Morales for MLK50

Kellogg strikers and supporters rally in Memphis Oct. 8. Kellogg strike, like strike at John Deere and others today, is battle against bosses' drive to put crisis of capitalist system on our backs.

BY SUSAN LAMONT

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — "This is my first strike," Gerald Lawrence told this *Militant* worker-correspondent on the Kellogg's picket line here Oct. 22. He has worked at the cereal plant for two years. "We've gotten so much support! At first I didn't know what it would mean to be on strike, but now I've learned about solidarity. I've

learned about our history here, going back to the 1968 sanitation workers' strike" when Martin Luther King Jr. came to provide support.

Lawrence is one of 274 members of Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Local 252G who walked out Oct. 5, along with BCTGM union members at Kellogg's cereal plants in Battle Creek, Michigan; Omaha, Nebraska; and Lancaster, Pennsylvania — more than 1,400 altogether.

While the union asks local members to picket in four-hour shifts at one
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UAW strike at John Deere is a labor battle for all workers

BY EDWIN FRUIT

WATERLOO, Iowa — The hall of United Auto Workers Local 838 here was teeming with striking union members Oct. 21. They were signing up for medical insurance being provided by the local and taking advantage of the strike cafeteria, staffed by union mem-

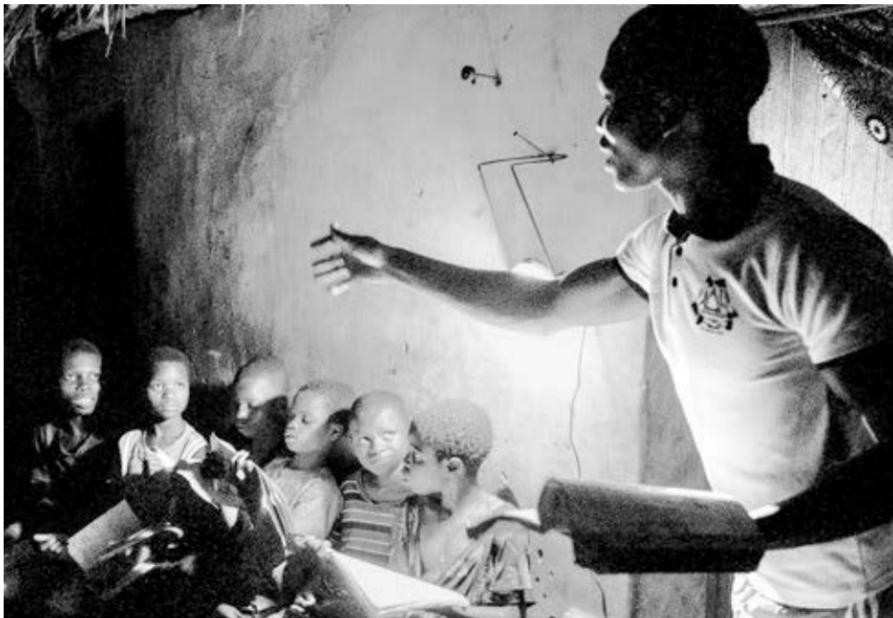
As we go to press . . .

On Oct. 27 Richard Rich, a member of UAW Local 79, was hit by a car and killed as he crossed over to join the picket line at the Deere parts distribution center in Milan, Illinois. The *Militant* joins the union in honoring his life as the strike continues.

bers, where they can get free meals.

More than 10,000 UAW members are on strike at John Deere's 14 agricultural and construction equipment plants, most in Iowa and Illinois. They had voted by 90% to strike beginning Oct. 14 when
Continued on page 4

Working class must lead in defense of land and labor, stewardship of nature



Pascal Maitre

Students study by solar lamp in Benin in 2017. While 700 million people worldwide lack access to electricity, anti-working-class environmental schemes call for ban on new power plants.

BY TERRY EVANS

For 25 years the United Nations has hosted periodic conferences on climate change, where rival government leaders pose as self-righteous defenders of the environment. These capitalist regimes compete ruthlessly to advance their interests while perpetuating the fraud their goal is to protect

the planet for future generations. The Conference Of the Parties summit (COP26) in Glasgow, Scotland, beginning Oct. 31 will be no different.

More than 100 heads of state are expected to attend. Some, like Chinese President Xi Jinping, say they probably won't. None will pro-

Continued on page 9

Cuba mobilizes to oppose US-gov't organized call for Nov. provocations

BY SETH GALINSKY

Groups organized and financed by the U.S. government have announced plans for public actions in several provinces in Cuba Nov. 15, pushing the slander that Cuba is a brutal "dictatorship." Government officials denied the request for march permits, pointing out the provocations are part of Washington's decades-long campaign for "regime change" against Cuba's socialist revolution seeking to "fracture and divide" the Cuban people.

The marches are called for Nov. 15, the day the Cuban government will reopen the island to tourism, based on its outstanding success in combating the COVID-19 pandemic. The intent of the "protests" is to sabotage Cuba's
Continued on page 8

Puerto Rican actions demand gov't act to end power blackouts

BY SETH GALINSKY

Thousands took to the streets of San Juan Oct. 15 to demand the Puerto Rican government cancel the obscenely lucrative contract it gave Luma Energy, a privately owned U.S.-Canadian joint venture, to take over the U.S. colony's electrical transmission and distribution network.

Gov. Pedro Pierluisi and the Financial Oversight and Management Board for Puerto Rico, imposed by Washington to assure its control over the U.S. colony's economy,
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—On the picket line, p. 5—

United Metro Energy workers rally in New York strike battle

Clarks shoe workers strike against wage cuts in UK

Calls to silence UK professor hit free speech, women's rights

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

LONDON — Professor Kathleen Stock is winning support in her fight against calls by campus protesters for the University of Sussex in Brighton to fire her. The campaign against Stock targets free speech and her defense of women's rights. It is carried out in the name of fighting transphobia.

At the beginning of October the two-year campaign against Stock culminated with groups of protesters wearing masks and balaclavas demanding her firing, after graffiti targeting Stock appeared across campus. Cops warned her to stay away from the university and take measures to protect her security.

More than 2,800 university staff across the U.K. have signed a statement supporting the professor.

"We are outraged at the campaign of sustained abuse to which Stock has been subjected for years," the university employees wrote. "We unreservedly condemn the escalation of this intimidation in recent days, including the prominent display on campus of posters and stickers calling for her to be fired."

A group called Anti Terf Sussex accuse Stock of being on the "wrong side of history." "Terf," short for "trans-exclusionary radical feminist," is a derogatory term used against supporters of women's rights who maintain the scientific fact that biological sex cannot be changed.

Stock, a professor of philosophy, published a book in May, *Material Girls — Why Reality Matters for Feminism*. In it she writes that "trans

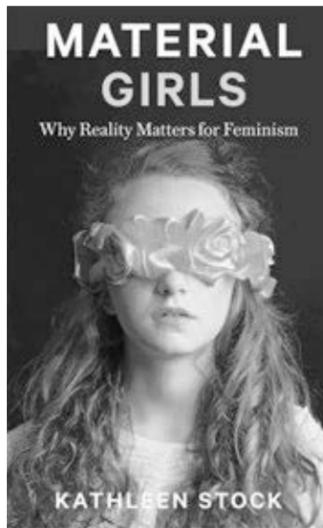
people deserve lives free from fear. They deserve laws and policies that protect them from discrimination and fear." But in some circumstances — prisons, rape counseling, sports — sex should take precedence over a person's gender, in order to protect women's rights, she says.

These are not abstract philosophical differences. They affect interests vital to the working class.

Stock cites the 134 complaints of sexual misconduct in public sports centers and swimming pools in 2018, including 120 that took place in same-sex changing rooms. Such facts "seem to be ignored by organizations ... rushing to instigate self-identification as the official means of entry into women-only spaces on their premises. They have shown little thought for the girls in tough schools for whom single-sex spaces used to be a welcome relief from bullying or sexual harassment by boys."

Two years ago 40 faculty members attended a student-organized event called at the same time as one of Stock's lectures to protest her views. In January 600 philosophy academics in the U.K. and internationally signed a letter condemning Stock.

The Sussex branch of the University and College Union refused to fulfill its responsibilities to defend Stock from the calls to remove her, instead urging the college's management "to take a clear and strong stance against transphobia at Sussex." Like the middle-class left, the UCU yields the defense of rights that are crucial



Telegraph

Professor Kathleen Stock has won support against demands by campus protesters University of Sussex in Brighton fire her. In name of fighting transphobia, they target free speech and her defense of women's rights. Inset, her book, *Material Girls — Why Reality Matters for Feminism*.

to the working class to the governing Conservative Party, which acts as if it is taking the moral high ground as it governs for the bosses.

Its minister for women and equalities, Elizabeth Truss, and Universities Minister Michelle Donelan condemned the attacks on Stock. Senior figures in the opposition Labour Party are divided over demands for the professor's firing for expressing scientific views that are shared by millions — that differences between men and women are real and immutable.

Female academics across the U.K.

are facing threats and witch hunts for holding similar views as Stock's. Jo Phoenix, a professor at the Open University, had a December 2020 lecture cancelled after students threatened to "shut it down." Phoenix's "crime" was questioning whether people self-identifying as trans women should be placed in women's prisons.

Professors Rosa Freedman at the University of Reading, and Selina Todd at Oxford University, have had classes and speeches cancelled for expressing similar views after campaigns targeting their free speech.

Join Cuba Solidarity Caravans Oct. 31 Halt Washington's economic war against Cuba! End travel restrictions! U.S. out of Guantánamo!

Chicago

Assemble noon, Cermak Plaza, Berwyn, southeast corner of Cermak and Harlem, southside of McDonald's.

Los Angeles

Sat., Oct. 30, assemble 11 a.m. Avalon at Scottsdale, Carson. Avalon exit off I 405.

New York

Caravan departs 1230 p.m., 62nd St. between Amsterdam and Columbus Ave. Rally, 1 p.m. José Martí statue, 59th St. and 6th Ave.

San Francisco

Assemble 1 p.m. Powell and Market Streets.

Seattle

11 a.m., rally at Ballard Farmers Market (Market and Leary). Noon, march to 15th Ave.

For information on other actions visit: nnoc.info

CANADA

Montreal

Caravan departs 2:00 p.m., Lafontaine Park, parking lot at Sherbrooke and Calixa-Lavallée streets.

Vancouver

Caravan departs 12 p.m. Killarney and 48th St., Killarney Community Centre parking lot.

UNITED KINGDOM

London

Sat., Oct. 30. 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. Seven Sisters Station, 218 High Road, N15 4NP.

Bristol

Sat., Oct. 30. Assemble 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. in College Green, BS1 5TJ

THE MILITANT

Interest in Thomas Sankara, Burkinabe Revolution

The trial of the killers of Thomas Sankara, and of the 1983-87 revolution he led in Burkina Faso, is fueling new interest in his example and speeches. The 'Militant' covers the struggles of working people in Africa and urges fighters to study the writings of Sankara.



June 29, 2013, rally against Blaise Compaore, his 1987 coup against Sankara, in poster.

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Vote Socialist Workers Party!

Continued from front page

Alec Baldwin's movie "Rust" in New Mexico. In the days since, it has become clear the responsibility for the catastrophe is the cost-cutting, profit-driven conditions on the set — like on the sets of Hollywood productions everywhere.

This is why members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees — the union that represents 60,000 behind-the-camera workers on productions like "Rust" — threatened to strike over conditions like those by a vote of over 90%. Daily schedules of 14 to 16 hours, few meal breaks, speedup that cuts corners — including on things like whether guns ready for use are loaded or not — are the norm. Set workers report there had been a number of earlier accidental prop gun discharges.

The morning of the shooting seven workers on the set held a protest about conditions on "Rust" and were ordered off the set by the producers — who include Alec Baldwin — and replaced by nonunion crew members. The death of Hutchins was a product of these working conditions, of the capitalist rulers' drive for profits.

As boss attacks on working people continue, SWP campaigners find a real interest in their program and activities.

In addition, a big political obstacle facing the working class is the capitalist two-party setup. Democrats and Republicans alternate in government claiming they are the "lesser evil," while both defend a system founded on our exploitation and oppression. Working people need a political party of our own, a labor party based on the unions that can bind workers together in common struggle and build a movement to take political power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers and establish a

workers and farmers government.

Campaigning for the SWP's revolutionary program doesn't end Nov. 2. Over the following three weeks campaign supporters can join in successfully concluding the international drive to sell 1,300 *Militant* subscriptions, 1,300 books by SWP and other revolutionary leaders and raise \$130,000 for the annual Party-Building Fund. And the fight to win more working people to this perspective goes on following the drive.

SWP campaigns provide an opportunity for the communist movement to defend its political rights in the face of the rulers' attempts to restrict ballot status of working-class parties. They provide an opportunity to reach out broadly, leverage the hearing the party gets and to build our movement here and around the world.

Keep campaigning for the SWP

In Minneapolis, Doug Nelson, SWP candidate for mayor, and David Rosenfeld, the party's candidate for City Council, Ward 12, spoke with Akima Fields Oct. 23. He had met Nelson several months earlier while the campaign was collecting signatures to put the SWP candidate on the ballot.

Fields asked the candidates what had happened to the workers who were locked out by Marathon Petroleum in St. Paul Park.

"After a six-month battle the Teamsters went back with their union intact, with dignity and pride in their fight," Nelson said. "They refused to return before the company reinstated workers who were fired at the beginning of the fight."

Fields, an assembly worker, said he first learned about unions when he worked in construction in Harlem, in New York. Workers of all backgrounds would load up into a union van, he said, and drive to a construction site where "the union representative would tell the bosses to hire the union members. That's the power they had."

Fields subscribed to the *Militant* and purchased the books *Are They Rich Because They're Smart? Class, Privilege, and Learning Under Capitalism* and *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, both by SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes.

On Oct. 23, in Fort Worth, Texas, SWP campaigner Dennis Richter met Percy Gipson, a recent high school graduate now enrolled in an aviation mechanic school. He said four years ago his 18-year-old cousin, Tiara Williams, was shot dead as she sat in her car. "Tiara was caught between crossfire. The police did an initial investigation, but nothing more was done," he said. Students at the high school where Gipson studied organized a demonstration to demand a further inquiry.

"Criminal violence and gangs come from the work-



Militant/Josefina Otero

Alyson Kennedy, left, SWP Texas campaign chair, and SWP campaigner Dennis Richter, right, talk with Percy Gipson in Fort Worth, Texas, Oct. 23. "Justice for Tiara," painted on Gipson's truck, is part of fight to force a real investigation into street killing of Gipson's cousin, Tiara Williams. "Criminal violence, gangs, come from workings of the capitalist system," said Richter.

ings of the capitalist system," Richter said. They breed fear and demoralization, and undermine working-class solidarity. When millions of working people joined together to uproot Jim Crow segregation, "crime went down," Richter said. "We need to build a similar movement led by the working class."

Gipson subscribed to the *Militant*, bought *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?* and pledged to contribute to the SWP Party-Building Fund.

Rachele Fruit, the SWP candidate for Atlanta mayor, and supporter Martin Navera campaigned in McDonough, Georgia, Oct. 16, a mile from the John Deere distribution center here where some 80 UAW members are on strike.

They met John Hall, who was interested in the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. "The book talks about what Malcolm learned in the last year of his life from meeting revolutionary fighters in Cuba and Africa. He saw that the solutions he was looking for went beyond Black nationalism," Navera said. "Yes," said Hall, "he saw that oppression was a global problem. But what are you doing? What's your aim?"

Fruit said Malcolm was a revolutionary who explained that the capitalist system needed to be overthrown and replaced. "We are revolutionaries too. We think it will take a revolution in the United States to end wars, exploitation and racism. We look to the Cuban Revolution as an example of the kind of society human beings can build."

"You know you are in the Black community here, don't you?" asked Hall. Navera responded, "We're here because we don't care what color your skin is. It will take all of us to build a movement to

support every worker's struggle."

"That's what I wanted to hear! How can I join you guys?" said Hall, who subscribed to the *Militant* and purchased *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and *Are They Rich Because They're Smart?*

To help win new readers to the *Militant*, books that tell the lessons for today of past revolutionary struggles and to contribute to the SWP Party-Building Fund, contact the branch of the party nearest you, listed on page 10.

Campaign to expand reach of 'Militant,' books, SWP fund

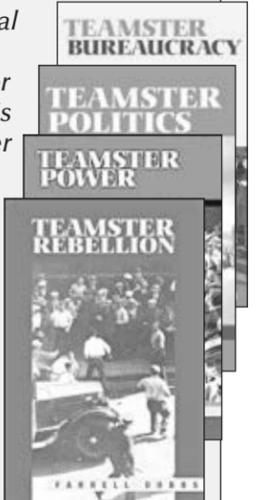
October 2 - November 23 (week three)

Country	Sub quota	Subs sold	Books quota	Books sold	Fund quota	Fund received
UNITED STATES						
Albany	80	28	80	46	\$8,200	\$460
Atlanta	80	36	80	40	\$11,200	\$2,478
Chicago*	115	71	100	41	\$13,500	\$3,154
Cincinnati	60	15	60	15	\$5,000	
Dallas	40	27	40	18	\$3,100	\$400
Lincoln	12	8	12	12	\$350	\$106
Los Angeles	85	46	85	55	\$13,700	\$748
Miami	30	9	30	10	\$4,200	\$300
Minneapolis	55	31	55	41	\$5,000	\$457
N. New Jersey	75	37	75	37	\$6,600	\$1,190
New York	105	67	105	76	\$16,300	\$3,428
Oakland	85	48	85	58	\$13,100	\$1,183
Philadelphia	30	18	30	13	\$4,000	
Pittsburgh	45	25	45	21	\$4,000	\$1,724
Seattle	65	30	65	30	\$12,000	\$1,403
Washington	50	24	50	18	\$5,800	\$1,720
Other						\$3,073
Total U.S.	1012	520	997	531	\$126,050	\$21,824
Prisoners	25	25				
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	40	19	40	25		
Manchester	40	26	40	19		
Total U.K.	80	45	80	52		
Canada	90	41	90	38		
New Zealand	25	8	25	12		
Australia	25	8	25	7		
Total	1,257	647	1,217	640	\$126,050	\$21,824
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Malcolm Jarrett, mayor

Seattle

Henry Dennison, mayor
Rebecca Williamson, City Council at-Large

Deere strike battle for all labor

Continued from front page
the bosses refused to back off attacks on their pay, benefits and working conditions. Key issues include company demands to expand to three divisive tiers of pay and benefits.

This *Militant* worker-correspondent came here with Mark Severs, a member of Teamsters Local 638 in Minneapolis. Severs had worked with Teamsters Local 120, also based in Minneapolis, to bring down cases of water and boxes of snacks for the strikers' picket shacks.

Strikers at the Local 838 union hall told us similar donations were coming in from all over the area.

"We've gotten monetary and food donations, firewood and material for constructing weatherproof huts for each picket site," Paul Jungen II, the local's financial officer, told us. Kirk Drape, one of the union vice presidents, explained that there are 3,100 Deere workers in Local 838. He said they've set up nine picket shacks covering the company's five plants in Waterloo. And that workers will get \$275 weekly strike pay as they staff picket lines, or help out on other strike-related duties.

Hundreds of strikers and their supporters rallied outside the Local 838 hall Oct. 23, cheering, chanting and listening to other unions and local politicians — many who have relatives who worked for Deere — offer solidarity.

"Your fight here, your strike — when you voted 10,000 strong to go out the door and do what was right to protect future generations of John Deere workers and UAW workers, it wasn't just for them," Rick Moyle, executive director of the Hawkeye Area Labor Council, told the rally. "It was for the entire movement. It was for every working family, not only in the state of Iowa, but in the United States."

"There's been a resurgence in union power, and it's what is needed at this time," Phillip Sanchez, a Mason City farmer and member of Teamsters Local 238, said.

Waterloo Mayor Quentin Hart joined the rally. The five members of the Board of Supervisors of Black Hawk County, where Waterloo is located, issued a proclamation supporting the strike.

After the rally participants fanned out to augment picket lines at the plants.

Deere bosses feel some pressure. They put out a news release the day before the rally announcing they will continue to provide health care for the strikers.

At the same time, they got a compliant judge in Davenport, south of here, to issue a draconian restraining order limiting UAW Local 281 members picketing Deere there. The injunction, issued by Chief Judge Marlita Greve, restricted workers picketing "near the gates" to four. As winter approaches, she barred bonfires of any kind and strikers bringing chairs to the picket line. She prohibited picketing or congregating "near the contractor gate entrance."

Fight for dignity, future generations

Kayla Schaefer, who has worked 10 years at John Deere and is a member of the local's Women's Committee, took us to meet some of her co-workers at one of the picket lines. "I used to see people on strike when I was younger and never dreamed that I would be in this situation," she said. "But sticking together makes us stronger and it will help us get what we're asking for." She told us that women make up 20% of the workforce at Deere.

Workers at this picket line told us "the union gave concessions in the 1997 contract, including approving a two-tier system. Now the company wants a third tier for new workers. They wouldn't get a pension like we do, and their insurance benefits would cost them more."

They pointed out the company is making money hand over fist, and tells the press it expects 2021 net income will be between \$5.7 and \$5.9 billion.

As we visited another picket line,

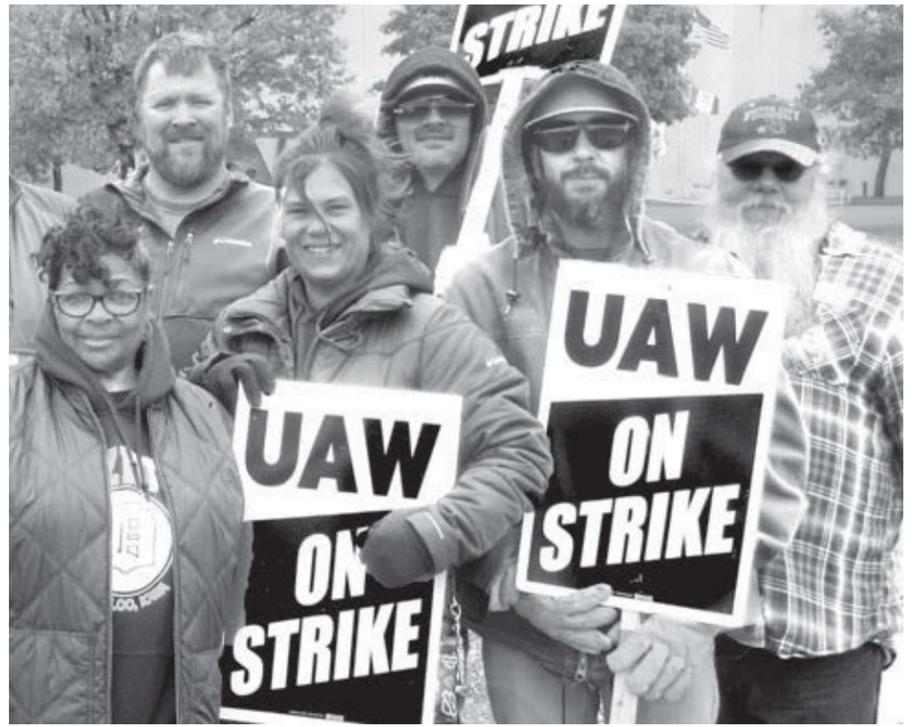
Farmers reject Deere moves to pit them against strike

BY NAOMI CRAINE

CHICAGO — It's an old ploy. When workers stand up and fight to improve wages and working conditions, the bosses and big-business press cry crocodile tears for those they claim will be hurt by the "greedy" workers. In the case of the United Auto Workers strike at John Deere, a propaganda campaign is underway to try to pit farmers against the strikers.

An Oct. 18 article in the online Farm Journal claimed that after just five days "the strike is already impacting farmers who are busy with harvest," by making it harder to get parts and new farm equipment.

"The John Deere strike has farmers worried," read the headline on the NBC News website Oct. 19. If you read past the headline, what actually comes across is how farmers were being squeezed by



Militant/Edwin Fruit

UAW strikers picket John Deere plant in Waterloo, Iowa, Oct. 21. Company wants to impose divisive three tiers of wages and benefits to drive down conditions for all workers.

donated wood frames were being dropped off to assemble weatherproof shacks. The same thing was happening at all the other picket sites.

Strikers told us that a number of workers at the plant also labor after-hours on their own farms. News media has been helping Deere bosses try to pit farm families against the strikers, as the strike is taking place while many farmers are harvesting their crops.

Minnesota farmer Brian Brekken was quoted by KTTC-TV in Rochester, Minnesota, as saying, "Before, when John Deere had machines down, you

get the parts the next day. Now they're saying that's not going to happen.

"So, if one of these went down and we can't get the part, you know, we'll be sitting."

On another picket line we talked to David Smith, who has worked for John Deere for 18 years. "We need to stand together with our numbers and we are in this for the long haul," he said.

"Deere tries to keep us divided with the different tiers," Smith said. "What if my kids want to work here? Why should they get lower pay, little benefits and no pension? We're doing this for them."

skyrocketing prices for new and used equipment and parts well before the strike. It cites an auctioneer who said used tractors and other farm equipment are selling for 30% to 50% more than they were two years ago. Meanwhile, John Deere is boasting record profits.

"John Deere is obviously making a lot of money. I think they can afford to share more with the workers," Gary Hoskey told the *Militant* in a phone interview. He grows corn, soybeans and hay on 300 acres in central Iowa. He said new John Deere combines cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. "Most small farmers don't have that stuff," he said, describing how he recently needed a part to fix his 1978 John Deere combine. The dealer had the part, but the price was exorbitant. "So I figured out a way to jerry-rig it."

"If John Deere cared about farmers, they wouldn't force them to sign service contracts saying they can't repair their equipment except through their dealers," Jim Goodman, a retired dairy farmer in Wonewoc, Wisconsin, told the *Militant*. "The new equipment has software that's locked. It's very expensive if you have to get it fixed. John Deere's policies hurt farmers way more than the strikers do." There have been lawsuits by farmers against Deere and other companies in recent years demanding the "right to repair" one's own equipment.

"I don't think most farmers begrudge workers a wage raise," Goodman added. "The corporations dictate to you, whether you're a worker or a farmer who has to buy from them."

While workers are exploited directly by the capitalist employers, small- and medium-scale farmers see much of the value they produce appropriated by the bankers who charge high interest on loans farmers need every

year to get the crop in. And the big agricultural monopolists price gouge them for seed, fertilizer, pesticides and other inputs, and pay low prices for their produce at the other end.

Average farm debt adjusted for inflation has been rising for decades. It dipped briefly this year, due to federal aid and rising commodity prices. But farmers don't expect that to last.

"Grain prices are up quite a bit this year, so that's been helpful," said Vernon Jantzen, who has a small farm in southeastern Nebraska and is vice president of the Nebraska Farmers Union. "But the cost of fertilizer, fuel and equipment is shooting up. That's going to put more of a squeeze on farmers."

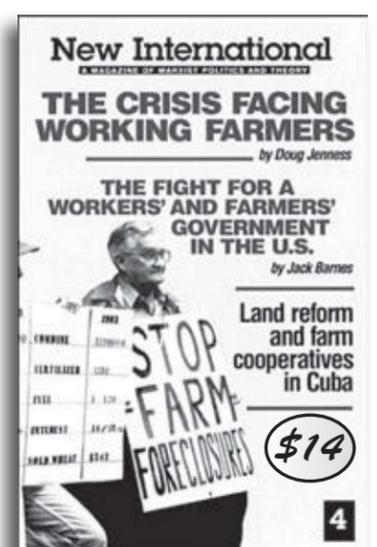
"Already if you wanted a new John Deere combine you have to wait until 2023, they're so backlogged," Jantzen said. He was impressed by the fact that UAW members voted down a third tier wage. "People are sick of being pushed around and ignored."

"The bottom line is I support the workers striking," Hoskey said. "Farmers and labor need to support each other."



Future Farming

Farmer on combine harvester. Bosses, backed by capitalist press, try to divide farmers from workers by saying strike at John Deere will cause machinery, parts shortages during harvest. Family farmers, who face debt squeeze by corporations, banks, identify with workers on strike.



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United Metro Energy workers rally in New York strike battle

BY SARA LOBMAN

NEW YORK — Over 50 Teamsters Local 553 strikers and their supporters rallied outside the midtown Manhattan offices of John Catsimatidis, the owner of United Metro Energy in Brooklyn, Oct. 19 demanding he reach an agreement with workers at the heating oil and gas delivery company. The workers, who voted to join the Teamsters in 2019, have been on strike for six months.

Forbes magazine reports Catsimatidis has a net worth of \$3.7 billion. He owns the Gristedes grocery-store chain and a number of other energy, real estate and media companies.

“We voted for the union because we needed protection and better pay,” fuel-terminal operator Ivan Areizaga told the *Militant* at the rally. He explained that some of the strikers had come to the rally while others kept up the picket line in Brooklyn.

“There are other strikes taking place around the country now,” André Soleyn, also a terminal operator and the picket captain, told the rally, including strikes against Warrior Met Coal in Alabama, John Deere, and Kellogg’s. “We’re all workers together.”

Soleyn told the *Militant* that in spite of two years of negotiations, the company has never agreed to a contract with the terminal operators, mechanics and workers who install and service customers’ boilers. “We are asking to get the same pay and benefits as those who do the same work at other companies in the area,” he said. Some of United Metro’s workers make only half the \$37 standard hourly wage for fuel-terminal operators in New York City.

After Catsimatidis bought the company in 2013, Soleyn said, it began posting profits. “They met with us and told us, ‘We appreciate you.’ But still didn’t give us more money. That’s when we went to the union.”

The company has fired some of the strikers and hired eight “replacement” workers. “But it’s not safe,”

he said. There’s 6.5 million gallons of product on the company’s site. “It normally takes a year to get trained. The plant is near a waterway and a bridge. If there is a spill or explosion, people would get hurt and a lot of carcinogenic chemicals would be released.”

The union has filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board to get the firings overturned.

Unionists from several Teamsters locals, a member of the Communications Workers of America who works near the Brooklyn picket lines, local politicians, and others joined the protest.

Solidarity and contributions are needed. Join the picket line! Send checks made out to Teamsters Local 553 (with “Strike Fund” on the memo line) to 265 W. 14th St., Room 305, New York, NY 10011.



Militant/Lea Sherman

Teamsters Local 553 members on strike against United Metro Energy in Brooklyn rally Oct. 19 at Manhattan offices of owner John Catsimatidis. Speaking is picket captain André Soleyn. Unionists are demanding wage raise to match prevailing pay in the industry in New York area.

Clarks shoe workers in UK strike against wage cuts

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

STREET, Somerset, England — “We have to win this,” said Francis Foley one of 130 workers on strike against wage cuts at Clarks Shoe’s Westway distribution center. “If we don’t, it won’t be worth working in this place.” Foley’s comments expressed the determination of the 50 workers, members of the Community union, picketing the center Oct. 20. The strike began Oct. 4.

“We’re currently on 11.16 pounds an hour” (\$15.40), shop steward Don Gray told the *Militant*. “The company is cutting the hourly rate to 9.50 pounds. Currently our half-hour lunch break is paid. No more. They’re eliminating overtime pay, and cutting sick pay. They’re even taking away our paid 10-minute morning coffee break.”

The company, which recorded over half a billion pounds in profits between 2010 and 2017, says that the cuts have been forced on it by the pandemic. Workers who refuse employment on the new terms will be deemed to have resigned — a tactic

known widely in the labor movement here as “fire and rehire.”

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has called fire and rehire “unacceptable,” but local Member of Parliament James Heapey, from Johnson’s governing Conservative Party, has attacked the striking workers for fighting bosses’ efforts to impose it at Clarks.

Bosses: ‘Change your lifestyle!’

“We were given three meetings where a Human Resources representative tried to convince us of the new contract conditions,” said Foley. “If we haven’t agreed by the third meeting, we’re fired on four weeks notice. I told her that there was no way I could live on 9.50 pounds an hour. It’s difficult enough on 11.16 pounds. She told me I’d need to change my lifestyle!”

Clarks is a household name in the U.K., having begun shoemaking in rural Somerset in southwest England 200 years ago. The strike action has gotten some media coverage, featuring condemnation of LionRock Capital, a Hong

Kong-based venture capital company that took over Clarks in the last year.

“All manufacturing has been moved out and is now done in Vietnam, India, Indonesia and other countries,” Gray said. “LionRock bought the brand name and venture capitalists will do what venture capitalists do but we’ve not had a pay raise in six years.”

“When I started here, it was a well-organized union shop with decent pay and conditions,” said Daryl Harding, who has worked there for 24 years. “But year after year they’ve chipped away at our conditions and, over time, the union has gotten weaker. We need to relearn how to use union power.”

‘Wage cuts and rising prices’

“That’s especially true now as we’re facing a double whammy — wage cuts when prices are rising,” Harding said. He pointed to the 1.40 pound per liter gas price being advertised at the nearby supermarket. “Yesterday it was 1.37 pounds,” he said. Inflation in the U.K. is running at 3%. The Bank of England’s chief economist, Huw Pill, projects a rise to 5% next year. Miguel Patricio, CEO of giant food manufacturer Kraft Heinz, recently told the BBC that people have just got to get used to paying more.

Clarks says it is ending its two-tier wage setup by slashing wages of workers getting a higher rate and marginally increasing the rate for new workers, from the 8.91 pounds an hour up to 9.50 pounds.

“That’s ridiculous,” says Gray. “If the company thinks that all workers should be on the same rate — which we certainly do — they should bring the lower paid workers up to 11.16 pounds.”

The government announced Oct. 25 that the national minimum wage will be increased to 9.50 pounds an hour starting in April 2022.

“What they’re really doing is trying to weaken the union through divide and rule,” said Liam Reddin, a shop steward for workers on the lower rate. Most of these workers are continuing to work, though Reddin and his wife, Zhenys Petkova, have joined the strike. A substantial majority of workers at the center are on strike.

Clarks says any worker who can’t live on the new contract can just work extra hours.

Continued on page 6

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



November 11, 1996

NEW DELHI, India — Some 1 million telecommunications and postal (P&T) workers here launched a nationwide strike over a wage dispute October 23. A week later, the walkout remained solid, having shut down most postal services, telephone line repairs, and the sending of telegrams.

Thousands of workers have staged protest rallies and set up picket lines outside post offices and telecommunication centers in New Delhi since the walkout began. Unionists have burned effigies of the communications minister, a social democrat, who declared the strike illegal. The workers are demanding the government abolish a ceiling on annual productivity bonuses to P&T employees. Many workers depend on these bonuses to supplement low wages.

The government conceded the strike is near total in both postal and telephone services. The telecommunications ministry has sought to bring troops to act as strikebreakers.



November 12, 1971

On Aug. 15, the Nixon administration launched the 90-day wage freeze, followed by the creation of a special Pay Board whose function is to drive down real wages. The major targets are the powerful industrial unions, whose contracts for wage increases must now be approved in advance by the Pay Board.

What can the labor movement do? There is only one force on which the workers can rely: their own power to mobilize mass independent struggles against the employers and the government. The unions should establish their own political party, responsible to the labor movement.

The 1972 elections will offer the first opportunity to use the electoral arena nationwide to respond to Nixon’s attack. The candidates of the Socialist Workers Party are campaigning in support of independent political action by labor, and those who agree should join in.



November 9, 1946

Big real estate sharks are moving to rip the ceilings off rents and add billions of dollars to the cost of living of the American people. The wealthy real estate interests are hammering at the Truman administration for “justice and emergency relief” for the “poor” landlords who are raking in 40 percent more than before the war.

The landlords are in this position to put the squeeze on the workers because the government has failed to relieve the housing shortage by a full-scale program of government low-rent housing construction. Opposition of the real estate interests to government “competition” is behind the government’s housing failure.

So-called “landlord strikes” are spreading throughout the west coast and moving east. The landlords are conducting an organized refusal to rent vacancies, while millions are in dire need of housing.

Sectarian battles, meddling by Tehran deepen Lebanon crisis

BY ROY LANDERSEN

Leaders of the reactionary Hezbollah in Lebanon claim the Oct. 14 sniper attack that killed seven and injured some 30 people at a protest it organized was carried out by rival Christian-based Lebanese Forces.

Hezbollah, a Tehran-backed group organized in predominantly Shiite neighborhoods, has a powerful and well-armed militia. Hezbollah and its allies dominate the country's coalition government. Lebanese Forces militias fought Hezbollah and other Muslim-based groups during the country's 1975-1990 civil war.

Lebanese Forces leaders repeatedly deny starting the deadly October conflict. They say Hezbollah-led demonstrators, some armed, approached a Christian neighborhood and that residents there fired on them in self-defense. Lebanese Forces leader Samir Geagea was summoned Oct. 25 to testify before a military court over the clashes. Sixty-eight people have been charged so far over the killings.

Hundreds of supporters of Hezbollah and its allies in the Shiite-based Amal Movement had been demonstrating to demand the removal of Tarek Bitar, the judge investigating a huge explosion at the port of Beirut in August of last year. The blast killed over 200 people, injured thousands more and forced a quarter of a million to flee their homes.

The disaster was caused by the detonation of 2,750 tons of highly flammable ammonium nitrate kept in a port warehouse near densely populated residential areas. For six years authorities debated what to do about this but did nothing, even after a fire started there. Hezbollah uses Beirut's port to store its weaponry supplied by Tehran.

Hezbollah and Amal leaders are trying to prevent the judge from issuing arrest warrants against top officials allied with their organizations. Bitar's investigation is popular with many of the families of victims of the explosion.

UK Clarks strike

Continued from page 5

Strikers are winning support. Postal workers have refused to cross the picket line. There is a constant cacophony of sound as drivers passing by honk in solidarity. Messages backing the workers have come from steelworkers, who are also organized by the Community union.

On Oct 14 they were joined on the picket line by 40 workers from different unions mobilized by the local Mendip Trades Union Council. A solidarity rally is being planned for Nov. 13 here.

Send messages of support to Daniel Francois, regional organizer, Community, 10 Bath Mews, Bath Parade, Cheltenham, GL53 7HL. Tel: 01242-708090; email: dfrancois@community-tu.org.

New International

A magazine of Marxist politics and theory, 1934-present

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Online at themilitant.com
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In the aftermath of the killings, Hassan Nasrallah, head of Hezbollah, accused Geagea of trying to restart the civil war and boasted that Hezbollah's militias numbered 100,000 armed fighters. The entire Lebanese army is only 85,000.

Nearly 2,000 members of Hezbollah have been killed in the last decade during the group's bloody intervention aiding Tehran in neighboring Syria's civil war. They have fought to prop up Bashar al-Assad's widely hated regime and to extend the military, economic and political sway of the Iranian rulers in the region. Over a million Syrians have sought refuge in Lebanon since the civil war began.

Having dominated successive Lebanese governments, Hezbollah is now identified in the eyes of many working people as part of the capitalist ruling class that has enriched itself and is responsible for the sharply worsening conditions they face.

Economic crisis hits workers

The resources of Lebanon's army have been depleted by the financial crisis since the devaluation of the country's currency, the Lebanese pound. Security chiefs warned recently that the crash in the value of soldiers' wages would undermine their combat morale. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland announced a further \$67 million in aid to the Lebanese military during an Oct. 14 visit to Beirut. The U.S. rulers seek to bolster the Lebanese army in order to counter Hezbollah and Tehran.

Back Kellogg strike, fight against divisive wage tiers

Continued from front page

of the two plant entrances every third day, many put in more hours. Some come every day. The main picket line in front of the plant is on Airways Boulevard, a busy thoroughfare heading to the nearby airport. Honks and shouts of support for the strikers from passing motorists and truck drivers are nonstop, all day and all night.

Local 252G hosted a solidarity barbecue Oct. 23 that drew some 100 union local members, their families, supporters from several area unions, the NAACP and others from the community, including a contingent from the Beale Street Corvette Association, whose membership includes several strikers. They drove their lovingly cared-for cars in a contingent to the picket line.

"Equal pay for equal work" is one of the most popular signs on the picket line, reflecting union members' strong opposition to Kellogg's demand that the union agree to a new, permanent two-tier wage and benefit setup that would deepen divisions among workers.

The company wants to boost its profits by making permanent two classes of workers — "legacy" employees hired before 2015 and "transitional" workers, who will never reach the same pay and benefits of longtime employees.

"After the 10-month lockout in 2013-14, we settled that 30% of the workforce here could be 'transitional' workers," said Local 252G member Scott Evans, a maintenance mechanic who has worked at the plant for nine years. "Part of the agreement was that those workers would move up to full pay and benefits over time. But that



AP Photo/Hussein Malla

"Act for Justice" monument, where massive explosion in August 2020 at Beirut port killed over 200 people, wounded thousands, left 250,000 homeless, expresses outrage of working people.

nounced a further \$67 million in aid to the Lebanese military during an Oct. 14 visit to Beirut. The U.S. rulers seek to bolster the Lebanese army in order to counter Hezbollah and Tehran.

Nuland also pushed for the Lebanese government under Prime Minister Najib Mikati to reach an austerity agreement with the International Monetary Fund.

Both the Lebanese rulers and the imperialist-backed IMF agree the "solution" to the economic crisis requires ending subsidies on imported food, medicines and fuel that working people depend upon. This would come on top of already dire shortages of these vital supplies.

Inflation, sharply exacerbated by the 90% collapse of the Lebanese pound, has produced a fall in the real income of working people by over a third. Food prices have risen 557% since October 2019.

Two years ago hundreds of thousands poured into the streets of Beirut, angered by a lack of jobs and to protest the country's sectarian-based political order that divides government positions along religious lines. They chanted, "We are all Lebanese. On the streets, we are not Shiite or Sunni or Christian. We are citizens."

Today the impact of the economic crisis is far deeper.

never happened, except for a few that replaced workers who retired.

"Now the company wants to remove the cap of 30% on the number of 'transitional' workers they can hire," Evans said. Longtime employees would keep their wages, pensions and health insurance for now, "but there would be nothing for the 'transitionals,' who will be more and more of the workforce."

As the Bakery Workers union website explains, "The Company is trying to divide the workforce by asking the current workforce to sell out the next generation of Kellogg workers."

Like many Kellogg's strikers, Evans is inspired by the number of other strikes going on around the country, including the strikes earlier this year at Frito-Lay and Nabisco, both organized by the BCTGM, and the current strike of 10,000 United Auto Workers at John Deere. "I told my wife that 2021 is going to go down in the history books!" he said.

John Deere workers are fighting for higher wages and against imposition of a third-tier setup for workers at that company.

"I took the job at Kellogg's because I thought I had a chance to become a 'legacy' employee," said Nicole Alexander, who has worked at the plant since April. As a 'transitional' worker, she makes \$19.92 an hour, compared to \$33 an hour for longtime workers, she said. "We get no pension, only a 401(k) plan, and have to pay much more for our health insurance. They want us to use vacation days instead of using Family and Medical Leave," a federal program that allows workers to take unpaid time off when they need it for medi-

cal or family reasons.

"At the same time, we're making millions for Kellogg's," she added. "We worked seven days a week all through the pandemic. We had co-workers who died from COVID. And this is how the company treats us."

Kellogg's reported global sales of \$3.6 billion in the last quarter, and profits of some \$380 million.

"How could we agree to a permanent two-tier setup?" Local 252G Vice President Kevin Bradshaw told the *Militant*. "It would mean two classes of membership in our union and we would be divided among ourselves. We can't sell out our future."

Workers at the Memphis plant make Corn Flakes, Frosted Flakes, Apple Jacks, Rice Krispies and other Kellogg's cereals.

The international union has prominently displayed on its website — BCTGM.org — two special features, "Facts Behind the Kellogg Strike" and "5 Ways to Support the #KelloggStrike." They contain information helpful to winning support to the fight from fellow workers, explain where you can join their picket lines, and where you can send a message of solidarity or a contribution to each of the four union locals on strike.

Kellogg's announced Oct. 25 it had offered to restart contract talks with the BCTGM, including on the two-tier setup.

"You think about all the money they are spending to try to break us, but can't agree to equal pay and benefits," Bradshaw wrote on the local's Facebook page Oct. 24. "If you think this is not war then you need to wake up! Come too far to turn around all we can do now is turn the pressure up!"

Vaccines must be the property of humanity, not for monopoly profit

BY ROY LANDERSEN

“The U.S. capitalist rulers and their government should be compelled to rapidly expand the production and distribution of enough vaccines to immunize billions of working people around the world against COVID-19,” Malcolm Jarrett, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Pittsburgh, told the *Militant* Oct. 25.

“But pharmaceutical bosses, backed by their governments, are driven to maximize profits, which means a vaccine shortage with deadly results,” Jarrett said.

Moderna, Pfizer and other capitalist pharmaceutical companies were granted gigantic handouts by Washington as they rushed to capture vaccine markets. Their ownership of vaccine patents has guaranteed their monopoly and blocked the urgent manufacture and distribution of medicines worldwide.

“They claimed these scientific developments as their own private property, not a conquest that should be placed at the service of humanity,” said Jarrett. “Our unions and other working-class organizations should fight to force these companies to make their products and know-how available worldwide.”

Only a tiny fraction of vaccines have been provided to the least developed capitalist countries in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and Asia, often at exorbitant prices. Of the 200 governments that started vaccination programs before Oct. 25, the seven slowest have vaccinated only 1% of the population. Five of these countries are in sub-Saharan Africa. The other two are Haiti and war-ravaged Yemen.

Under former President Donald Trump’s Operation Warp Speed, Moderna was backed with government scientific cooperation to develop its mRNA technology. It received federal grants of \$2.5 billion for everything from development to clinical trials. The U.S. government pre-ordered \$1.5 billion of its shots, ensuring company owners a guaranteed market.

By concentrating its supplies almost exclusively in advanced capitalist countries and defending its patent monopoly against competitors, Moderna is reaping billions. It expects \$20 billion in revenue this year, making its vaccine one of the most lucrative medical products in history.

Question is which class rules

“This is the character of the entire medical system in the U.S. — to generate profits for a handful, not to provide health care. To change this requires changing what class rules this country,” Jarrett said.

Moderna and rival manufacturers like Pfizer are using their monopoly to charge premium rates to countries in the semicolonial world, where the cost of the drug is out of reach for millions. In effect they are delaying vaccine distribution and extending the length of the pandemic in order to uphold their grip on markets and profits.

The U.S. government paid \$15 or more for each dose, which it dispenses without cost. Moderna is selling a limited supply at a premium rate to less industrialized countries. It charged the governments of Botswana, Thailand and Colombia nearly double the U.S. price.

Both Moderna and Pfizer are de-



Agencia Cubano de Noticias/Rodofo Blanco Cué

Child gets vaccinated against COVID in Cuba, Aug. 3. All Cubans down to 2-year-olds will be vaccinated by year’s end. Revolutionary Cuba exports its vaccines to Vietnam, Venezuela, and more.

fending their patents on the groundbreaking mRNA technology because there is a wide range of possible — and highly profitable — future medical applications that can be developed utilizing the know-how.

Dr. Tom Frieden, a former head of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, admitted that these companies are “behaving as if they have absolutely no responsibility beyond maximizing the return on investment.” In fact, like all capitalists, they act on their “responsibility” to advance their interests at the expense of working people.

In response to the slowing rate of vaccinations in the U.S., President Joseph Biden imposed a mandate, giving boss-

es the power to fire workers who refuse to get vaccinated, including health care workers and most federal employees.

“The Socialist Workers Party urges all workers to get vaccinated. We urge our unions to open their facilities and fight to maximize vaccinations,” Jarrett said. “But we oppose all mandates. They open the door for the capitalist rulers to impose other mandatory restrictions on working people — a threat to our rights and our ability to fight against exploitation and oppression.”

Covax, the World Health Organization project backed by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and a number of governments, claims it will ensure the global distribution of vaccines. But

it’s on course to fall way short of its claim to distribute 2 billion doses by the end of this year. So far Covax has shipped only 371 million.

WHO officials said that only 15% of vaccinations promised for delivery to the semicolonial world had been sent. Africa, with 17% of the planet’s population, has less than 1% of the world’s vaccine manufacturing capacity.

As a result, the pandemic could “easily drag on deep into 2022,” said senior WHO official Dr. Bruce Aylward.

The U.S. rulers’ decadeslong embargo of Cuba has had a serious impact on that country’s ability to buy or produce medications. Nonetheless, health care remains free and universally available. Some 99% of Cuba’s population down to 2-year olds have received the first shot as of Oct. 14. Havana plans to have the entire population vaccinated by the end of the year.

The Cuban government mobilized medical workers and volunteers to achieve the fastest weekly vaccination rate of any country in the world.

Cuba is the first Latin American country to have developed and produced not just one but three COVID vaccines. One is being exported to Vietnam and Venezuela while another is being manufactured in Iran.

“This continues a proud internationalist record made possible because workers and farmers in Cuba took power in 1959 and made a socialist revolution,” Jarrett, said. “They have wielded it ever since for the benefit of not just Cubans, but for all humanity.”

Protests hit landlord who killed tenant arguing against eviction

BY MALCOLM JARRETT

WASHINGTON, Pa. — On Sept. 1, Leonard Wayne Williams Jr, who is African American, a U.S. Air Force veteran and a single father of two, was shot and killed by Quentin Trisler Jr. Trisler is the son of Williams’ landlord.

Trisler had gotten into an argument with Williams after putting an eviction notice on his door ordering Williams and his family to move out. The killing, and the decision of Washington District Attorney Jason Walsh not to press charges, sparked a wave of protests.

Trisler had posted eviction notices at several other homes that day. The Joseph Biden administration let a federal pandemic-based moratorium on evictions run out in August.

Williams Jr’s 10- and 15-year-old daughters witnessed the entire confrontation, including the shooting. They said Williams was in the house when Trisler drove up and posted the eviction sign. Their father went out to ask him why he was being evicted and argued with him.

Trisler went to his truck and pulled out a gun. Williams raised his hands and backed away, saying, “You’re not going to shoot me in front of my daughters, are you?” Trisler pulled the trigger, shooting him twice in the chest.

The DA’s office said the killing was “justifiable homicide.” Walsh said there were four witnesses besides Williams’ daughters

who claimed Williams was the aggressor and Trisler had reason to fear for his life. The DA refused to release the police report on the killing or identify any of the witnesses.

Nicole Grayson, Williams’ sister-in-law, told the *Washington Observer-Reporter* that the family was “absolutely livid.”

“When we found him, he was in the middle of the road, 10 feet away from the truck. The police are saying he was shot at the truck,” she said. “How is he 10 feet away, but he got shot at the truck?”

“We’ve been kept in the dark about everything. We want answers,” Nicholas Butler, Williams’ younger brother, told the paper. “We want to know where the four witnesses were and where they came from. And we want to know why you can kill somebody and they are just free.”

“The DA didn’t give us a chance. To him Leonard was just another Black guy in the middle of the road,” Leonard Williams Sr., Williams’ father and

a 67-year-old retired prison janitor, told the *Militant*. “We want him to reopen the case and release the police report.”

Since the killing, family members and other protesters have carried out daily actions and weekly rallies outside the Washington County Courthouse. The protests have drawn support from the Washington branch of the NAACP and the Center for Coalfield Justice, a group that fights to protect the health of miners and others in the region. Consol Energy runs the largest underground mining complex in the country there, a nonunion operation.

Washington is also home to one of ATI’s nine steel plants, where workers carried out a hard-fought three-month strike earlier this year.

“I support these demonstrations because I don’t think justice has been served,” Andrew Goudy, president of the Washington NAACP, said. “How could it be justified homicide? Leonard Williams was outside the truck unarmed.”

Family members are raising money to pay for a lawyer and fight for justice. They’re selling T-shirts and Butler has set up a Go Fund Me site you can contribute to.

Williams was killed the day before his birthday. He would have been 37. “We’re in this for justice, not money,” Williams Sr., said. “They can give us all the money in the world and it won’t bring Leonard back.”



KDKA/Steve Willing

Family, supporters of Leonard Williams Jr. protest Sept. 20 at Washington County Courthouse in Pennsylvania. DA claims his killing by landlord was “justifiable.”

Puerto Ricans protest blackouts

Continued from front page

had claimed that privatizing the grid would lead to “reliable electricity.” Instead, since Luma took the system over from the government June 1, it has raised electric rates, while blackouts have become longer and more frequent.

According to Luma’s own website, on most days more than 100 neighborhoods are without power.

The deal is one more example of how U.S. imperialism uses Puerto Rico’s colonial subjugation to plunder its wealth and resources.

“Sometimes the lights go off for seven or eight hours,” Samuel Segarra, a tow-truck owner, told the *Militant* by phone from the Puerto Nuevo neighborhood of San Juan. Segarra is a spokesperson for Camiones Unidos, one of several groups of independent owner-operators that were part of a strike last month that forced the government to raise minimum mileage rates.

The fluctuations in power “ruined my refrigerator, machines I use to make keys for my work, and a machine I need to sleep at night,” Segarra said. For many on the island — including those who depend on insulin, which needs to be refrigerated — power interruptions are a matter of life or death.

Under the terms of the 15-year deal, the government is paying Luma more than \$100 million a year, in addition to control over some \$10 billion promised by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, ostensibly to repair damage from 2017’s Hurricane Maria, and to modernize the antiquated and deteriorating electric system. But Luma has not released any plan for how this would be done. The company has not replied to the *Militant*’s requests for information.

For more than a decade PREPA — the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority — had steadily cut the number of linemen and other essential workers and increasingly skimmed on even routine maintenance, while saddling

the government with \$9 billion in debt and an electrical system on the verge of collapse. It declared bankruptcy in 2017.

As part of the deal, Luma told the utility’s workers they had to reapply if they wanted to keep their jobs. And that they would not be offered their previous benefits. Some 75% refused, transferring to other government agencies or retiring. “They got rid of a lot of workers with experience and further reduced the size of the workforce,” said Segarra, saving millions for the bosses at the expense of working people.

Imperial arrogance

In a show of imperial arrogance, the owners of Luma refused to answer questions from the Puerto Rico legislature about its operations, agreeing instead to give information to the U.S. Congress’ Natural Resource Committee. That’s how news got out that top Luma executives are getting salaries of over \$200,000 a year and CEO Wayne Stensby gets \$500,000.

“That’s more than the president of the United States!” Johnny Rodríguez Ortiz, president of the Association of Retirees of the Electric Power Authority, told the *Militant*. He worked for 29 years in one of the utility’s electric generation plants.

Even before Luma took over most of the government utility’s operations, PREPA — which still runs the generation plants — owed more than \$441 million to the workers’ pension funds.

“The retirees are worried that we will end up with zero pensions,” Rodríguez said. “We’ve been sending letters to the government, but no one answers us.”

The government tried to block people from getting to the Oct. 15 demonstration, Rodríguez said. “The mayor of San Juan prohibited parking in the public lots and from parking anywhere within a half kilometer of the march,” and police blocked off some access points to the area. “Despite that we filled the streets,” he said. Numerous



Thousands in San Juan Oct. 15 protest blackouts, which have grown since control of electric utility was given to U.S.-Canadian-owned Luma, deepening imperialist plunder of Puerto Rico.

union contingents joined the action.

In the midst of the controversy over Luma, the Puerto Rican legislature put on a show of protest against the “Amended Plan of Adjustment” — which the Financial Oversight Board drew up to impose on the island — by refusing to immediately issue \$7.4 billion in new bonds to finance it.

The bipartisan Junta, as the board is known in Puerto Rico, was appointed by President Barack Obama in 2016 to wield power over Puerto Rico’s government and maximize its payment on more than \$72 billion debt owed to bondholders by the island’s government agencies. In addition, the government owed \$55 billion to various retirement funds.

Over the last decade the government has laid off thousands of work-

ers, raised sales taxes, and slashed government programs, all while printing more bonds, growing the debt even higher.

The Junta claims that the new plan is a “milestone” for Puerto Rico. They say the bondholders have agreed to reduce the debt to some \$34 billion, as long as the colonial regime pays \$7 billion up front and \$1.15 billion a year for debt service. The plan is also contingent on slashing government pensions for at least 16% of retirees. The Junta considers any pensions over \$2,000 a month excessive.

Gov. Pierluisi assured the Junta and bondholders that with minor changes he will get the deal done. “It’s all colonialism,” retiree leader Rodríguez says. “That’s why we have to keep organizing in the streets.”

Cuba mobilizes to oppose US-gov’t organized call for Nov. provocations

Continued from front page

efforts to confront the economic difficulties that were exacerbated by the stepped-up attacks by Washington and by the pandemic.

Despite the tightening of the U.S. economic embargo over the last few years, Cuba created its own COVID vaccines and will have 90% of the population fully vaccinated by Nov. 15, an accomplishment that strengthens the revolution and has boosted the morale of working people.

In the United States and the rest of the capitalist world, doctors’ offices closed as the virus spread and working people were left on their own, often told to stay at home with no medical care. It’s the opposite in revolutionary Cuba, where medical care is universal and free of charge. The government poured scarce resources into vaccine development and, along with Cuba’s mass organizations, organized doctors, nurses, medical students and other volunteers to go door to door — literally to millions of households a day — to make sure anyone with symptoms received medical treatment.

At the same time, Cuba maintained its internationalist solidarity, responding to requests by governments from Haiti to Italy by sending hundreds of doctors around the world to help fight coronavirus.

“We are getting back on our feet through our own efforts, thanks to the indomitable spirit, dignity and resilience of our people; with the serene and firm steering by the country’s leadership;

with the spirit of victory and creativity that has been forged after many years of harsh battles,” said an Oct. 13 editorial in *Granma*, the daily newspaper of the Communist Party of Cuba.

Impact of US embargo, pandemic

In an interview with the *Militant* at the end of September, Carlos Fernández de Cossío, head of the Cuban foreign ministry’s department of U.S. affairs, described some of the challenges the Cuban people are striving to meet, faced with the combined effect of the U.S. embargo, the pandemic and the worldwide capitalist economic crisis.

“Every week our government has to review its list of pressing needs and — based on the limited income from foreign tourism and exports — make decisions on what we can allocate funds for and what we have to postpone,” he said. This is one of the reasons reopening the country to international tourism Nov. 15 is important.

The acute economic pressures, including U.S. attempts to block oil shipments to the island, combined with Washington’s political offensive, “came together and were the context” for protests that took place in Cuba on July 11, Fernández de Cossío noted.

The majority of people who took part in those protests “were people genuinely frustrated by the blackouts, the food shortages, the problems with public transit,” he said. But the actions were not spontaneous. The initiators and organizers of the actions were opponents of Cuba’s revolution

Working class must lead in defense of land and labor

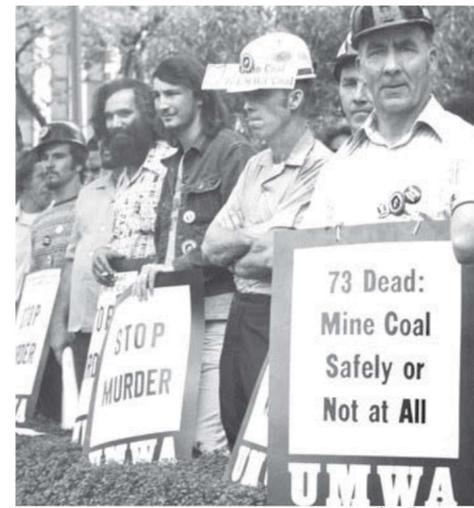
Continued from front page

vide a scientific explanation for the causes of environmental destruction, expose the hysteria that surrounds most commentary on it, nor address related questions that are critical for the working class. This includes the unmet energy needs facing millions of the world’s people who live without electrical power.

Alok Sharma, the summit’s president-designate, a former investment banker and U.K. secretary of state for business, energy and industrial strategy, says, “We must change the way we look after our land and seas.”

But there is no common “we.” There are two contending classes: the handful of ruling capitalist families and their middle-class hangers-on that exploit and oppress working people; and the billions of workers and farmers who toil for a living. The capitalist rulers drive to maximize profits at our expense through life-threatening speedup on the job and assaults on our wages and conditions, with complete disregard for how their organization of production also degrades the earth, skies and oceans.

“How social labor is organized to transform nature — to whose benefit, to what social and economic ends — depends on the class relations of production. It depends on which class rules, which class holds state power,” explains the Socialist Workers Party resolution, “The Stewardship of Nature Also Falls to the Working Class: In Defense of Land and Labor,” available in *New Internationalist* no. 14.



United Mine Workers march in Washington, D.C., 1974, part of revolution in union that won right to stop production if dust levels were too high. Fight by workers to take control of production from bosses is road to safety on the job and halting destruction of environment.

“If we translate everything commonly thought of as an environmental issue into how to advance the protection of the working class, and how the working class can extend that protection to all, then we can hardly ever go wrong,” SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes writes. “With that approach, we will increase the possibilities for concrete solidarity in fighting against ecological abuses and outrages.”

As workers and our unions fight to wrest control of production from the bosses, we will be able to enforce safety

other factors being equal. Despite various promises by capitalist rulers worldwide to cut emissions, these hit a new high worldwide in 2019, the U.N. reports.

President Joseph Biden plans to attend the summit, to tout his claims that his policies will cut U.S. carbon emissions by up to 52% by 2030, over their 2005 levels. Even if this goal was met, U.S. emissions would still be greater at that time than any of the world’s largest polluters.

Biden predicts the U.S. will reach “net-zero” in carbon emissions by 2050. That doesn’t mean U.S. bosses will stop poisoning the atmosphere. The widespread and profitable trade in so-called carbon credits or “offsets” instituted at previous U.N. summits is a scam that lets the rulers of the most developed capitalist countries purchase the right to pollute — while claiming that they don’t — if they just pay workers in less developed semicolonial countries to plant trees.

Giant oil companies purchase offsets at a fraction of the price it would cost them to actually take steps to cut the pollution created by the for-profit-at-all-costs priorities the bosses set. For example, the French energy group Total claimed a shipment of liquid natural gas it drilled and transported from Australia to China last year was “carbon neutral.” Its new “carbon neutral” status came from paying villagers in Zimbabwe a pittance to take measures that contribute to preventing forest fires.

Just prior to the summit, British business Group EY proclaimed it was in fact now “carbon negative,” as a result of buying offsets in a slew of unspecified reforestation projects. When the *Financial Times* inquired why the company gave little detail about how this miraculous feat was achieved, the company derisively replied that its statement was “the length of press release we think journalists can absorb.”

Biden stokes climate hysteria

“The existential threat to humanity is climate change,” Biden said on CNN Oct. 21. Fever-pitched predictions of imminent doom will be trumpeted

throughout the conference. Even more prophecies of the imminent destruction of the planet come from middle-class radical groups worldwide.

Such hysteria campaigns are both endemic to and necessary for the maintenance of capitalist social relations. Their aim is to instill fear and paralysis among working people.

Liberal media and capitalist politicians of all stripes frequently blame climate change for social crises that accompany natural disasters like hurricanes and flooding. But changes in the weather had nothing to do with why scores were killed in the U.S. during and after Hurricane Ida last month. That was a consequence of the policies of the bosses and their government — scant flood prevention, outdated drainage, lack of generators and storm shelters, and no evacuation plans. Working people were left to fend for themselves.

Advancing the working class

Many who say stopping climate change must take precedence over all questions, regardless of class divisions, insist there can be no significant future development in the semicolonial world. The power consumption required would destroy the world. Working people there must do without.

While the number of people without access to electricity dropped from 1.2 billion in 2010 to 759 million by 2019, the number of people without electricity in sub-Saharan Africa rose during the same period. Only 7% of the population of South Sudan have access to electricity. Percentages are barely higher in Chad, Burundi and Malawi. Intermittent electrical supplies mean COVID-19 vaccination doses that require cold storage can’t be delivered to 70% of hospitals in sub-Saharan Africa.

Extending access to electrical power to all of the world’s 7.9 billion people is critical to developing modern industry and cultural and political life, and for accelerating scientific advances that can deal with some of the effects of capitalist production and distribution, as well as challenges attributed to climate change.

The real question we have to face is a class question. Whether we face a future of continuing disasters, pandemics, wars and deprivation under capitalist anarchy and brutality depends on the organization and mobilization of the working classes. We are the only force capable of leading a fight to change society, to protect the land, water and air, to utilize scientific and technological advances for the benefit of all — as we fight to take political power into our own hands.

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Black troops aided fight against Washington's war in Philippines

Blacks in America's Wars — The Shift in Attitudes from the Revolutionary War to Vietnam by Robert W. Mullen is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. The excerpt below reveals a little known side of the 1898 Spanish-American War as newly emergent U.S. imperialism fought for a colonial empire from Puerto Rico to the Philippines. In both Cuba and the Philippines Washington fought revolutionary movements that had rebelled for independence from Spain, imposing a protectorate in Cuba and seizing the Philippines as a colony. Many Blacks in the U.S. backed Filipino independence, and Black U.S. soldiers sent to the Philippines openly sympathized with the resistance fighters. Copyright © 1973. Reprinted by permission of Pathfinder Press.



Filipino fighters in Cavite province, Philippines, in 1898. A 3-year war to repel U.S. imperialist annexation followed. Over 200,000 civilians, 20,000 guerrilla fighters and 4,500 U.S. troops died. Black soldiers in U.S. Army sympathized with Filipino fighters, many deserting to fight at their side.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY ROBERT W. MULLEN

When the Spanish-American War began, the total strength of the regular army was only 28,000 men. Among these were the four Black regiments that had been incorporated into the regular army after the Civil War and that had been very active in the Indian wars on the Western frontier. These regiments were to play a conspicuous role in American operations in both Cuba and the Philippines. ...

Afro-American troops were involved in the war against Spain from the beginning. There were at least thirty Blacks on the battleship *Maine* when it blew up [in Cuba], of whom twenty-two were killed.

In the ensuing jingoist campaign for war with Spain, Blacks, too, shared the whipped up indignation and anger over the loss of life. In addition, the official propaganda about fighting a war to free our "little brown brothers," the Cubans, Puerto Ricans, and Filipinos suffering under the yoke of the despotic Spanish, struck a responsive chord among Afro-Americans.

Initial Black support for the Spanish-American War was also intensified by the fact that this was the first war since Blacks had gained their freedom in the Civil War, and it took place at a time when the racial oppression against them had been intensifying for several decades. For that reason, many Blacks saw participation in the war against Spain as an ideal chance to prove their right to citizenship and equality. ...

When U.S. forces ended Spanish resistance in Cuba and Puerto Rico, they turned their attention towards the Philippine Islands. But in contrast to the campaigns in the Caribbean, there was widespread public opposition in the United States to involvement in the Philippines. ...

In the Philippines, an independence movement led by Emilio Aguinaldo

had already been fighting the Spanish. Between 1899 and 1902, 70,000 U.S. troops were sent to the Philippines to put down his movement, which had turned against the United States when the Americans showed their opposition to Philippine independence.

For three years, the United States Army engaged in a bloody war against the Filipino guerrillas, a war which in many ways paralleled counterinsurgency methods later employed in Vietnam. Among the 70,000 U.S. troops were the four regular army Black units.

Within the Black population of the United States as a whole, there was considerable opposition to intervention in the Philippines. Most Black newspapers and leaders publicly supported the idea of Filipino independence and felt that the United States was wrong to begin to develop a colonial empire of nonwhite subjects. They could not help but feel that this could only have a deleterious effect on the relations between whites and Blacks in the United States itself. Even such normally cautious Black figures as Booker T. Washington felt they had to speak out for Filipino independence.

The Black troops themselves were placed in an extremely pointed dilemma by the U.S. actions in the Philippines. Most displayed considerable identification with the nonwhite Filipinos, an identification that was heightened by the fact that white soldiers gener-

ally referred to both Black troops and Filipinos as "niggers." But most also felt that a good military showing by Black troops in the Philippines would enhance the cause of all Blacks in the United States and tried to reconcile these conflicting sentiments.

Opposition to the war by Blacks became so loud that by 1899 the War Department questioned whether it would be wise to send any Black troops at all to the islands. One War Department official doubted that such troops "if brought face to face with their colored Filipino cousins could be made to fire on them."

The question was finally resolved in favor of sending Black troops, and all four regular army regiments saw action in the war. As the Americanization of the islands progressed, and the color bars against Blacks and Filipinos also progressed, Black troops increasingly felt that they were being used in an unjust war, that they were in part responsible for the racism against Filipinos that they could see spreading with American control.

Although most Black soldiers swallowed their misgivings, with the hope that their actions would reflect favorably on Blacks in America, this was not a universal reaction. The desertion rate among the Black troops was very high. According to Stephen Bonsal, desertions from Negro regiments was very different from white desertions. While whites generally deserted after quarrels with officers, or because of opposition to discipline or laziness, Blacks deserted "for the purpose of joining the insurgents."

The Filipino guerrillas actively encouraged Blacks to desert. They regularly addressed posters to "The Colored American Soldier" in which they described the lynching and discrimination against Blacks in the United States and encouraged the Black troops not to be the instrument of their white masters' ambitions to oppress another "people of color." Blacks who deserted to the Filipino side were welcomed with open arms and often given positions of major responsibility.

Of all the Black deserters, the most famous was David Fagan of the Twenty-fourth Infantry. Fagan accepted a commission with Aguinaldo's forces and for two years wreaked havoc on the Americans.

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SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STATEMENT

Emulate Cuba's socialist revolution!

Statement by Joanne Kuniansky, Socialist Workers Party candidate for New Jersey governor, Oct. 27.

The Socialist Workers Party points to Cuba's socialist revolution as an example for working people to study and emulate. It shows the road forward for workers and farmers everywhere to organize in our millions to take political power into our own hands and end the immoral brutality of dog-eat-dog capitalism once and for all.

This is the reason the U.S. capitalist rulers' government organizes and funds counterrevolutionary groups in Cuba, part of its unceasing efforts to overturn the Cuban government and reimpose capitalist exploitation. President Joseph Biden's administration has tightened Washington's decadeslong economic and political war aimed at starving the Cuban people into submission.

The U.S. rulers will continue this offensive as the social and economic crisis of capitalism deepens here, leading workers to use and strengthen our unions to defend our wages, conditions and rights, and to aid all those who fight against the exploitation and oppression inherent in capitalist rule. You can see this unfolding in strike battles across the country today.

"What Cuba gives to the peoples," Fidel Castro said in 1962, "is its example." It's an example to millions of workers and farmers in the U.S. who reject being made to bear the brunt of capitalism's worldwide crisis and the impact of its never-ending wars.

Led by Castro and the July 26 Movement, Cuba's people showed what the working class is capable of accomplishing and what we can become.

They overturned capitalist rule and brought to power a workers and farmers government. Millions were organized to end capitalist property relations, by taking into their own hands the factories, plantations and banks, and reorganizing production to meet the needs of the toiling majority. At every step the revolutionary government relied on working people through their struggles, gaining confidence in their own capacities. It opened the door to deepening the fight to eradicate racism and to win women's emancipation.

As they fought, workers and farmers increasingly recognized the socialist character of their accomplishments and the importance of the Marxist



Joanne Kuniansky, SWP candidate for New Jersey governor, talks to UAW member Lucas Harville at Aug. 4 UMW solidarity rally for striking miners at Warrior Met in Brookwood, Alabama.

character of their leadership. In making a socialist revolution, they transformed themselves, becoming disciplined and class-conscious revolutionaries. Defending their conquests, they defeated a U.S.-backed invasion and have brought crucial internationalist solidarity to hard-fought struggles against imperialist exploitation ever since.

Che Guevara, one of the Cuban Revolution's central political leaders, explained, "To build communism it is necessary, simultaneous with the new material foundations, to build the new man." This is the potential of the working class everywhere.

Some 425,000 Cuban internationalist volunteers fought courageously to defeat the South African apartheid army's invasion of Angola in the 1970s and '80s. This great battle brought forward the end of apartheid's hated regime — an "unparalleled contribution to African independence, freedom and justice," in the words of Nelson Mandela.

The more working people in the U.S. understand about how Cuba's socialist revolution was led to victory and why it has endured, the better prepared we will be to meet the challenges posed by the crisis of capitalism here.

Join Socialist Workers Party campaigners in explaining and defending Cuba's living socialist revolution and building the party here that working people need to lead the coming American revolution!

Death penalty is used to terrorize working people

BY JANET POST

Two death-row inmates were executed in October, despite vigorous court appeals challenging the death sentences imposed on Ernest Lee Johnson and Willie B. Smith on the basis they violated the Supreme Court's 2002 ruling barring execution of "people with intellectual disabilities."

Johnson, 61, was executed Oct. 5 by an injection of pentobarbital at the Bonne Terre, Missouri, state prison. Smith, 52, was killed Oct. 21 by lethal injection at the state prison in Atmore, Alabama. Both Johnson and Smith were African American.

Johnson, the son of a sharecropper, was born with fetal alcohol syndrome because of his mother's addiction to alcohol and drugs. While in prison, multiple IQ tests showed he had the mental capacity of a child and was reading at a primary-school level. In 2008 a fifth of his brain tissue was removed in an operation for a brain tumor.

Johnson had been convicted and sentenced to death in 2005 for the 1994 killing of a manager and two workers while robbing Casey's General Store in Columbia, Missouri. Johnson said he was under the influence of cocaine and was stealing money for drugs.

The death penalty in the U.S. is used to terrorize and intimidate working people to defend capitalist property relations and "law and order." The ruling capitalist families — who chew up workers' lives in industrial "accidents," Washington's wars abroad, and in a medical system that assures treatment for the wealthy, leaving working people on their own — use their prisons and death chambers to maintain their domination.

In August the Missouri Supreme Court denied Johnson's petition against being put to death based on his being intellectually disabled. The court also denied his request to be executed by firing squad, after his public defender, Jeremy Weis, argued that because of his brain operation pentobarbital could trigger painful seizures.

On the day of Johnson's execution, dozens of people demonstrated outside the prison grounds, Gov. Michael Parson's office, and the Boone County Courthouse, organized by Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. "So many states are moving against the death penalty now and Missouri is one of the ones keeping this barbaric injustice going," said demonstrator and MADP member Laird Okie.

Catholic Pope Francis also appealed to Gov. Parson against Johnson's execution. In 2020 he issued a papal encyclical to all bishops ratifying the call for abolition of the death penalty, first put forward by Francis in 2018.

Willie B. Smith was executed after nearly 30 years on death row. He was convicted in 1991 of abducting, shooting and killing Sharma Ruth Johnson, after he used her bankcard to withdraw \$80 from an ATM machine in Birmingham, Alabama.

Three hours before he was to be executed in February, as he was in the holding cell next to the death chamber, the U.S. Supreme Court postponed the execution. It ruled he had to be allowed to have his spiritual adviser with him.

This has been a growing fight in similar cases in recent months. The victory meant Smith became the first Alabama death-row inmate to have his own pastor with him during his execution.

Smith's IQ tested between 64 and 75, and averaged out at 72. When the Supreme Court ruled in 2002 that executing people with intellectual disabilities violates the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, which bars government use of "cruel and unusual punishments," the justices set an arbitrary "cutoff" for coverage under the ruling of an IQ score of 70, two points below Smith's.

Then in a 2014 decision the Supreme Court amended the earlier ruling, finding that the use of a rigid cutoff IQ score was unconstitutional. But the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit refused to apply that decision to Smith, arguing he was sentenced before it was issued. It was proper to put him to death, the court said, because of that "matter of timing."

Despite growing public opposition to the death penalty, the capitalist rulers' death chambers remain active. The next execution — of John Marion Grant — is scheduled for Oct. 28 in Oklahoma.

Protests erupt after military coup in Sudan

BY TERRY EVANS

Determined to prevent a return to military rule, tens of thousands took to the streets across Sudan to protest a coup by Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Burhan Oct. 25.

"Don't give your back to the army, the army won't protect you," chanted demonstrators. Strikes broke out among miners and other workers and calls for a general strike were played over mosque loudspeakers.

Demonstrators had protested in Khartoum a few days earlier warning against the prospects of the military seizing power. To enforce his takeover, al-Burhan arrested Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, declared a state of emergency, announced the dissolution of all trade unions and cut off the internet.

In 2019, weeks of street battles and strikes brought together working people from different national and religious backgrounds to topple the decadeslong rule of President Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

The protests were triggered by price hikes and fueled by the deadly impact of a civil war waged by al-Bashir on the country's ethnic minorities and years of suppression of political rights.

Al-Burhan's coup ousted the Sovereign Council, a joint military and civilian body established to replace al-Bashir. Military chiefs were due to hand over their leadership of the council in coming months, part of an agreement that was supposed to end with their complete withdrawal from government.

In June the International Monetary Fund announced a deal with Hamdok to wipe out \$50 billion of the government's debt in exchange for ending subsidies to working people that make it possible to get ahold of essentials. Shortages of wheat, fuel and medicines are forecast with annual inflation hitting 400%.

Further mass protests against the coup are planned for Oct. 30.

LETTERS

Dave Goldman

Dave Goldman, a longtime friend of the communist movement and former member of the Socialist Workers Party, passed away at his home here Oct. 5. Goldman joined the Young Socialist Alliance and SWP in upstate New York in the early 1970s and moved to San Diego to build the party in California.

He later transferred to Seattle and worked in the shipyards, and as a union machinist at Boeing, build-

ing the union and advancing the party's program. He dropped out of the party in the 1990s, but re-

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mained a lifelong friend, attending major public party forums and contributing generously to party funds.

Messages can be sent to swpseattle@gmail.com and contributions in his honor to the SWP, 650 S. Orcas St., #120, Seattle, WA 98108. Messages will be shared with his family. *Rebecca Williamson
Seattle, Washington*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.